

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTO 4098

EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: VANCE/OWEN /YOUNG MEETING WITH BOTHA/FOURIE

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

REF: SECTO 4091

1. SUMMARY: OWEN AND VANCE SUMMARIZED THE PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS OF THE DAR MEETING FOR BOTHA AND FOURIE, OWEN NOTING CERTAIN SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PATRIOTIC FRONT PROPOSALS AND THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. BOTHA AND FOURIE DESCRIBED THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTSJ COMMITMENT TO THE SETTLEMENT AND OPTIMISM THAT SMITH WOULD
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TURN OVER ON DECEMBER 31. SUCCESS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT DEPENDED CHIEFLY ON SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN DE-ESCALATION OF FIGHTING ESPECIALLY IN THE EASTERN AREAS, DURING THE 4-6 WEEKS.
AFRICAN SUPPORT WOULD GROW AS THE POWER OF THE AFRICAN LEADERS WAS RECOGNIZED. THE WORLD WOULD ACCEPT THEM WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT SMITH WOULD INDEED LEAVE. OWEN

STRESSED THE DANGER OF AN INTERIM PERIOD IN WHICH PARTIES TESTED EACH OTHER'S MILITARY POWER WITH POSSIBILITY OF STRONG SOVIET-CUBAN SUPPORT FOR THE PF. TO VANCE'S AND OWEN'S REPEATED REQUESTS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT OF AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE, BOTH NOTED THAT HIS RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS WAS VERY DELICATE AND HE REMAINED NON-COMMITAL. IN A LATER, PRIVATE MEETING HE WAS MORE FORTHCOMING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FIRST HOUR OF THE MEETING BETWEEN BOTH AND FOURIE ON THE ONE SIDE AND VANCE, YOUNG, OWEN AND THEIR PARTY ON THE OTHER RELATED TO RHODESIA. VANCE AND OWEN LED OFF BY DESCRIBING IN SOME DETAIL THE DAR MEETING, NOTING THE AREAS WHERE WE HAD MADE PROGRESS (E.G. ON UN FORCES AND CONTINGENT ACCEPTANCE OF RESIDENT COMMISSIONER'S POWERS IN DEFENSE AND LAW AND ORDER) AND DESCRIBING THE PROBLEMS OVER A) PF INSISTENCE ON DOMINATING THE GOVERNING COUNCIL : B) STILL NARROWLY DEFINING THE POWERS OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND C) DEMANDING A SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE WITHIN THE POLICE FORCE. OWEN NOTED THAT THE PROPOSAL NOW BEING PUT FORWARD BY THE PF FOR A GOVERNING COUNCIL WAS SIMILAR TO THE ARRANGEMENT WORKED OUT FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, EVEN DOWN TO THE TITLES OF THE MINISTERS OF DEFENSE AND LAW AND ORDER. WE HAD MADE IT CLEAR AT DAR WE COULD NOT ACCEPT DOMINATION BY THE PF AND HELD THE LINE ON THE POLICE. BUT IN VIEW OF THE BROAD SIMILARITIES ON THE SECRET

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GOVERNING COUNCIL ISSUE OWEN SAID IT MIGHT BE THAT THE TWO SIDES COULD WORK OUT SOMETHING IN A JOINT MEETING. THE PF HAD ACCEPTED TO GO TO A FURTHER MEETING, AND TOOK AN APRIL 25 DATE. WE RAISED THE VITAL ISSUE OF AMNESTY, OWEN CONTINUED. HE GOT THE FEELING THIS COULD BE NEGOTIATED. IT WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY WITH NKOMO; MUGABE WAS HARDER, BUT IT COULD BE NEGOTIATED. OWEN ALSO NOTED THAT CARVER HAD GIVEN HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE ARMY, AND MET NO OBVIOUS PROBLEMS. VANCE SAID THE FRONT LINE STATES HAD APPARENTLY HAD SOME INFLUENCE WITH THE PF ON THE GOVERNING COUNCIL ISSUE. ON THE POLICE, SOME OF THE FRONT LINE REPRESENTATIVES MIGHT HAVE BEEN SWAYED BY PF ARGUMENTS. BUT NYERERE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POINTS WE WERE MAKING ON THE ISSUE.

3. WHAT WORRIES US, WE SAID IS THAT A CONFLICT WHICH HITHERTO HAD BEEN BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE, IF LEFT TO CONTINUE, COULD WELL DETERIORATE INTO A CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE BLACKS WHICH COULD HAVE DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES IN MAKING POSITIONS MORE RIGID AND IN EASILY BECOMING INTERNATIONALIZED.

4. BOTHA REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS A GREATER DANGER OF THE CONFLICT BECOMING A TRIBAL ONE. NKOMO'S SUPPORT WAS RESTRICTED TO MATABELELAND. A SALISBURY-BALAWAYO STRUGGLE IS A REAL DANGER. SITHOLE, HE SAID, HAD DONE MOST OF THE FIGHTING AND FEELS HAS EARNED THE SETTLEMENT WHILE NKOMO'S PEOPLE HAD NOT REALLY BECOME ENGAGED. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN TO

NKOMO, AND MUGABE TOO FOR THAT MATTER. THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS ARE DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WILL INEVITABLY ATTRACT INCREASING POPULAR SUPPORT AS THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE SEE THEM ACTING AS LEADERS IN AUTHORITY MUZOREWA NAND SITHOLE HAVE REALLY NO PLACE TO GO. THEY
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ARE TIED TO SMITH. BUT THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THE DECEMBER 31 INDEPENDENCE PROMISE IS A GENUINE ONE. WHEN THE WORLD SAW THAT THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS WAS IRREVERSIBLE AND SMITH WOULD IDEED LEAVE, IT WOULDLD SUPPORT IT. FOURIE AND BOTHA EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THT AT LEAST HALF OF THE AFRICAN NATIONS WOULD ACCEPT IT EVEN THOUGH THEY DID NOT MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO RECOGNITION.

5. OWEN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IF THE SETTLEMENT WAS LEGITIMATE IN TERMS THAT A GENUINE ELECTION WAS HELD AND SMITH DID STEP DOWN, BRITAIN TOO WOULD HAVE TO GO ALONG. BUT HE SAID THAT HIS CONCERN WAS OVER THE INTERVENING PERIOD . SOVIETS AND CUBANS WOULD MAKE A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO THWART IT. IN THESE DAYS OF SURROGATE TROOPS, SITUATION CAN POLARIZE VERY QUICKLY.

IF WE DROPPED OUR IMPARTIAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PARTIES, WE COULD LOSE AFRICAN SUPPORT QUICKLY AND FIND OUR SELVES FACING HOSTILE AFRICAN NATIONS SUPPORTED BY CUBANS AND SOVIETS.

6. OWEN ALSO SAID THAT WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT, SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF COULD BECOME THE BUTT OF SANCTIONS EFFORTS. THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS ON RHODESIA COULD BE IMPORTANT TO ECONOMIC STABILITY THERE. IT IS HARD TO SEE--WE WILL NOT SEE--AND END TO SANCTIONS OUT OF A PURELY INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, OWEN SAID. BOTHA LATER REMARKED THAT IF THERE WERE FURTHER SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, IT WOULD CHANGE THE WHOLE SITUATION. "THE WHOLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD HAVE TO LOOK AT ITSELF IN AN ISOLATED WAY." IT HAS GREAT RESOURCES AND SOPHISTICATED LEADERS. YOUNG RESPONDED THAT WE HAVE NEVER WANTED SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA AND INDEED HAVE OFTEN DEFLECTED PRESSURES FOR THEM AT THE UN.

7. BRAND FOURIE SAW TWO CARDINAL ISSUES: THE SUCCESS OF
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THE INTERM GOVERNMENT OVER THE NEXT 4 - 5 WEEKS AND DE-ESCALATION OF THE FIGHTING. BOTHA ADDED THAT IF A SIZEABLE GROUP - 60 PER CENT TO 70 PER CENT -- OF FIGHTERS JOINED THE INTERNAL GROUP, THE EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT WOULD BE OVERWHELMING. HE DID NOT PREDICT THIS WOULD HAPPEN BUT SAID THAT UNTIL THE RESULT BECOMES CLEAR, WHICH WOULD TAKE 6 WEEKS OR SO, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE EITHER SIDE. IF SUCH EVENTS TOOK PLACE IN THE EAST, IT COULD PRESENT A REAL THREAT TO KAUNDA. THE BLACK MILITARY FORCE WHICH HAS BEEN BUILT UP IN RHODESIA IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST IN AFRICA.

8. YOUNG SAID THAT WE ARE MAINTAINING THE AAP PARTLY AS A SAFETY NET IN THE EVENT ONE OR THE OTHER GROUP FALLS APART. EITHER IS POSSIBLE. THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT MAY BEGIN TO FAIL. STRAINS WITHIN THE PF ARE GREAT, PARTICULARLY AMONG MUGABE'S SUPPORTERS WHO BELIEVE NKOMO MAY JOIN THE INTERNAL GROUP AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO INHERITING SOVIET-CUBAN SUPPORT WHEN THAT HAPPENS. VANCE SAID WE MUST TRY TO GET ALL THE PARTIES TOGETHER. WE MAY NOT SUCCEED, BUT NOTHING IS LOST BY TRYING. (BOTHA NODDED.) BOTHA SAID HE THOUGHT THE IDEA OF THE AAP AS A SAFETY NET WAS A CONSTRUCTIVE ONE. VANCE AND OWEN CAME BACK TO THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE PARTIES TOGETHER FOR A MEETING AND ASKED BOTHA'S SUPPORT FOR SUCH AN INITIATIVE. THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS MUST UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING TO FIND AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTIBLE SETTLEMENT. BOTHA PLEADED THAT HE HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WHO MAY, LIKE TRANSKEI CHIEF MATANZIMA, SEEK TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM SOUTH AFRICA. BOTHA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT LEADERS HAD PROPOSED AN OVERALL LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICA BUT STILL REFUSED TO GO BEYOND SAYING THAT HE TOOK NOTE OF OUR REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE ALL - PARTIES MEETING. AT A SMALLER MEETING WITH VANCE, OWEN AND YOUNG, HOWEVER, HE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN THIS REGARD BUT EMPHASIZED THAT THE SAG NEEDS TO BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL HOW THEY GO ABOUT IT.

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VANCE

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